PLANTER REACTION IN NORTH CAROLINA TO PRESIDENTIAL RECONSTRUCTION, 1865-1867

by

Kenneth Jay Miller

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School of
the University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Greensboro
July, 1964

Approved by

James S. Ferguson

Director

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Director James A. Ferguson

Oral Examination Committee Members

Jordan E. Kirkland

Robert D. Hughens

Richard Bardgett

August 22, 1964

Date of Examination

MILLER, KENNETH JAY. Planter Reaction in North Carolina to Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867. (1964) Directed by: Dr. James S. Ferguson. pp. 92.

When the Civil War ended, the planter faced many problems. The physical and economic destruction to the South had necessitated rebuilding. The capital with which to accomplish this had either been destroyed or had fled the region. In addition, the labor base of the region--slavery--had been eradicated. These were the major problems which confronted the planter.

Although North Carolina planters had differences, their enthusiastic support of Henry Clay they had in common. Most of them had been Unionists during the secession controversy.

Under Presidential Reconstruction, Provisional Governor William W. Holden called a convention which met and outlawed the secession ordinance, abolished slavery, and cancelled the war debt. There was little disagreement among planters on the first two issues, but they did not relish repudiation. They did not understand the view which Johnson held--that people who invested in "rebellion" should not profit by it.

Among the factors which led to planter alienation toward Presidential Reconstruction was the pardon controversy. Protesting that early secessionists were receiving pardons and loyal, Union men were not, they blamed William Holden. Planter reaction to the President himself was mixed. A few thought that he was trying to be fair to the

South. However, they came to oppose his actions. In doing this, they misunderstood Northern reaction which turned Reconstruction to the left, rather than to the right, as the planter had hoped.

The planters' most pressing social problem was what to do with the freedmen. They had predicted that, if freed, the Negro would never work and when the black man fled his home after the war, the planter was convinced that his prediction had come true. Most Negroes returned and the planter sought to utilize their labor and control their social activity. Therefore, the planter, not realizing the fury which this would cause in the North, backed the Black Codes.

The planter had to revise the labor system. When wage labor proved inadequate, sharecropping arose. In devising this system, the planter realistically faced the labor problem.

The public school system and the University of North Carolina faced extinction because of the cancellation of the war debt. The planter did not care for the common school. The University became involved in political controversies and eventually closed to await a reorganization.

During Presidential Reconstruction, the planter talked a great deal about immigration as a substitute for unreliable Negro labor. However, success in attracting immigrants was extremely limited.

The planter sought to justify the war to himself. He tried to dissociate himself from the responsibility for having caused the war. Since his cause had been right, he could not understand how he had lost. In seeking to adjust himself to the new era, he sowed the seeds which would later sprout into the idea of the Lost Cause.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am in the eternal debt of my advisor, Professor James S. Ferguson. His wise counsel and sagacious criticism led me away from many pitfalls during my research. His brilliant wit and timely stories carried us both through the drudgery of proofreading.

The staffs of the library of the University of North Carolina and the Southern Historical Collection at Chapel Hill aided me in locating material. I also wish to thank my wife, Debby, who persevered with me.

For any mistakes of commission or omission, I alone am responsible.

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"Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i'the air; strange screams of death;
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confused events,
New-hatched to the woful time."

Cornelia P. Spencer, Last Ninety Days of the War in North Carolina, p. 14.

I. INTRODUCTION

In April, 1865, the war machines of the North and the South ground to a halt. A truce was completed which spelled defeat and death for the short-lived Confederacy. The war was over and the troops began the long trek home.

The Union troops returned to find an industrial society whose growth in the preceding four years had been phenomenal. Prosperity was evident in most of the North. The "Industrial Age" had truly come to America.

The Confederate troops returned to a home scarcely recognizable. One Northern missionary reported, in 1867, that he:

> had seen in North Carolina a white mother hitch herself to a plow which her eleven-year-old son drove, while another child dropped into the furrows seeds Northern charity had given.[1]

In the invaded areas of the South the destruction was heavy.[2] Bridges and railroads had been destroyed. Lands were barren; the only remnant of human habitation on many farms

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[1] Myrta L. Avary, Dixie After the War (New York: Doubleday and Page, 1906), p. 81.

[2] For the economic prostration of the South see James G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961), pp. 543ff.

was a lone burned-out chimney.[3] The effects of arson were widespread as entire cities had been burned to the ground.[4]

The physical devastation to the South was obvious to the eye. But, the damage was deeper. Financial institutions, and therefore credit, were immobilized. Because the assets of the monied class were destroyed, there was a serious shortage of capital. Potential investors with surplus capital were fearful of the unstable conditions in the South. The slaves had been freed, thus wiping out a $250,000,000 investment in North Carolina alone.[5] For three years after the war, the United States government levied a tax on cotton, from ten to fifteen dollars a bale, which took sorely needed capital out of the state. Furthermore the price of cotton fell from a dollar a pound in 1865 to 25 cents in 1868.[6] The economy of North Carolina was

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[3]In describing the area around Goldsboro, Cornelia Spencer said, "Not a farmhouse in the country but was visited and wantonly robbed. Many were burned, and very many, together with out-houses, were pulled down and hauled into camps for use. Generally not a live animal, not a morsel of food of any description was left, and in many instances not a sheet or change of clothing for man, woman, or child." Cornelia P. Spencer, Last Ninety Days of the War in North Carolina (New York: Watchman Publishing Company, 1866), p. 95.

[4]Ibid., pp. 192-202, 204-208.

[5]Hugh Talmage Lefler (ed.), North Carolina History Told by Contemporaries (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 372.

[6]Allan Nevins, The Emergence of Modern America (New York: MacMillan Company, 1927), p. 10.

also weakened "owing to the shortage of labor and implements and a terrible drought . . . ."[7] Thus, it can certainly be said that "the section's most urgent problems were not political but economic."[8]

The wrecked economy and the unsettled labor system were surface results. Deeper in the mind of the South was the acknowledgement of defeat. With defeat came despair. Also, in defeat the South had to face the problem of the Negro's presence anew.

The proximity of the Negro had always been in the white man's mind. Few decisions were made, be they political or economic or social, upon which the race issue did not exert its influence. Now the problem of what to do with the Negro was complicated by the demise of slavery. The planter, so he thought, had to devise new means of keeping the Negro in a subservient position.

The Negro had helped create wealth in the South by his labor. This abundant labor supply had been at the beck and call of the planter; now the Negro was free and, at least theoretically, could accept or disregard the planter's command. Nevertheless, the Negro remained in the South and if the region's insatiable labor demands were

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 549.

to be met, a reorientation of his economic position was necessary.

The yeoman white had resisted the end of slavery as he had feared that should the "peculiar institution" be abolished, an economy based on wages might be inaugurated in which he would be thrown into direct competition with the Negro for economic survival. Such a system was intolerable to the yeoman because he believed, as the planter did, that the Negro was inferior. To be placed in a position of having to compete with the Negro upon economic terms was so utterly degrading as to be unthinkable.

An alliance of the planter and the yeoman had been built around white supremacy. This required that the yeoman and the Negro each have his own economic sphere. These distinct spheres were operative under slavery, but the emancipation of the slave would obliterate the dividing line between the two. These thoughts were in the yeoman's mind when the war ended. To him, emancipation would have two, deleterious effects. The psychological foundation, white supremacy, that enabled the yeoman to endure low economic levels would be undermined. Considerable pressure would be put upon the alliance between the planter and the yeoman.

This jumble of yeoman-planter relationships was symptomatic of the condition of the South at the end of the

war. The United States government had authorized the confiscation of much of the crops that had not been destroyed by the advancing Union army.[9] There was confusion as to ownership of land, and tax defaults and court cases served to confound the situation. Such were the conditions out of which North Carolina and the rest of the South must build a new society.

The paternalistic and semifeudal society in the Old South had been dominated by the planter. The planter had solved or tried to solve the problems which the region had encountered. When the final test came--the preservation of slavery--the planter had failed. What would he do now? Would he assert his traditional role as leader? If he did assert himself, could he possibly rebuild and reconstruct the South from the constricted, moribund economy which surrounded him? And since the planter suffered disillusionment from his past defeat, would he look to the future with hope?

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[9]E. Merton Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947), pp. 66-69.

II. PLANTERS

What was a planter in the ante-bellum South? There were many considerations in designating an individual as a planter. He could own twenty, thirty, fifty or more slaves, but did he have to live his entire life on a plantation to fall into that class? He had to have a certain amount of assets or wealth, but how much? Any limits used in a definition would have been arbitrary and untenable because the "idea" of the planter was just as real as the planter himself. There were many nonplanters who identified their interests with the actual planter class. Therefore, one did not necessarily have to meet the usual requirements to be considered a planter by the historian.

Politically, the planter and his close associates were usually followers of Henry Clay until the 1850's when the slavery controversy and sectionalism overrode the planter's affinity to Clay's nationalism. Then, some defected to the Democratic Party, but retained their Whigish ideas.[1] When secession came, many of these men opposed it as they saw that a break with the Union would

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[1]Charles G. Sellers, "Who Were the Southern Whigs?" American Historical Review, (New York, 1895-), LIX (January, 1954), 335-346.

hurt their interests. And although definition of a planter was difficult, actual planters were easy to identify.

Paul Carrington Cameron, the son of the distinguished Duncan Cameron, was born on September 15, 1808, in Orange County. After early tutelage, Cameron was sent to a preparatory school in Middletown, Connecticut. He attended both the University of North Carolina and Washington College (Trinity) at Hartford, Connecticut, graduating from the latter in 1829.

Returning home, he studied law and was admitted to the bar. He practiced a short while, but his attention was turned to agriculture and the management of his father's varied interests. In December, 1832, Cameron married Thomas Ruffin's daughter, Anna. Cameron and his well-known father-in-law became very close.

After the death of his father in 1853, Cameron had sole management of the vast family estate. By 1861 total Cameron holdings included some nineteen hundred slaves and Cameron himself was the wealthiest man in North Carolina. Although hurt financially by the war, he soon reestablished himself as the wealthiest man in the state. Among his many ambitions was his desire to see the University of North Carolina excel. As a member of the Board of Trustees, he worked unceasingly, never missing a meeting of the Board, to revive the University after the war.

An early Whig, Cameron had supported Henry Clay, but like many others he left the party because he came to see it as an expression of sectional interest. He served a term in the state senate from Orange County in 1856 as a Democrat. During the Civil War and Reconstruction, he avidly followed the events of the day, never missing an opportunity to criticize measures which he considered unwise. Continuing to manage his vast holdings, Cameron retained his mental vigor until his death at Hillsboro in January, 1891.[2]

Born in King and Queen County, Virginia, in November, 1787, Thomas Ruffin attended school in Warrenton, North Carolina. Then he entered the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and graduated in 1805. He studied law in Petersburg, Virginia, and later in North Carolina under Archibald D. Murphy. Ruffin was admitted to the bar in 1808 and began practice in Hillsboro, North Carolina.

Ruffin was elected to the House of Commons in 1813 and again in 1815 and 1816. He became a Superior Court judge, but resigned two years later to give his attention to private business. In 1825, he was elected to the same

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[2]Samuel A. Ashe, "Paul C. Cameron," Biographical History of North Carolina, ed. Samuel A. Ashe (Greensboro: C. L. Van Noppen, 1905-1917), III, 48-55.

Superior Court, but resigned once more in 1828 to become the president of the state Bank. In 1829 he left the bank for the Supreme Court as an Associate Justice; in 1832, he was elevated to the Chief Justiceship. He retired in 1852 to his home in Alamance County, but returned to the bench in 1858 after his unanimous election by the legislature. He served only one year before tendering his resignation to return once more to private life. In 1861 Ruffin served at the Washington Peace Convention as a Unionist. He returned to North Carolina and was elected to the Secession Convention although he was not even a candidate. He denied the constitutional right to secede but finally voted for the secession ordinance and wholeheartedly supported the Confederacy. After the war, he opposed the Constitutional Convention of 1866 and, later, Congressional Reconstruction. He retired to Hillsboro, where his son-in-law (Paul Cameron) lived, and died on January 15, 1870.[3]

Bartholomew Figures Moore was born on January 29, 1801, near Halifax, North Carolina. He was tutored at home until 1817 when he entered the University of North Carolina. After graduating in 1820, he read law with Thomas N. Mann and was admitted to the bar in 1823. He settled in Nashville, North Carolina, but had little success as a lawyer

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[3]Samuel A. Ashe, "Thomas Ruffin," ibid., V, 350-360.

there.

In 1828 Moore ran for the House of Commons and was defeated. He ran as a Whig, for he despised what he thought were the levelling influences of Jacksonian Democracy. Finding little success in Nashville, he moved to Halifax County. Here he began a lucrative practice and in 1836 was elected to the House of Commons. Because of his support for state aid to railroads, he was strongly opposed in the next campaign and was beaten by one vote. But in 1840 he was elected again. Thereafter, reelected twice, he continued his work to aid internal improvement projects. Other interests of Moore included asylums for orphans and the insane. In 1846 he did not run for reelection.

In 1848 he served as Attorney General for the state and in 1851 was chosen to help revise the statutes of North Carolina. From this time on, he worried about the slavery issue. In 1861 he refused to become a candidate to the Secession Convention, but accepted an appointment to the Board of Claims for which the convention had made provision. This was the only assistance he gave to the Confederacy. During the war, he continually wrote that the war was wrong and even refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy.

After the war, Moore went with David L. Swain and William Eaton to Washington to visit President Andrew

Johnson. He did not agree with the Johnson plan for reconstruction. Nevertheless, he went to the Convention of 1865 and drew up the ordinance which declared secession null and void. Politically, he was a moderate; he opposed William W. Holden, but did not campaign for Jonathan Worth in the gubernatorial race of 1865. In 1866 he helped write and vigorously defended the new constitution. His interest in public affairs continued, but he did not seek office. Moore maintained his practice until his death in November, 1878.[4]

Welden N. Edwards was born in Northhampton County, North Carolina, of old Virginia lineage in 1788. He practiced law in Warren County a few years before making his entrance into public life. In 1814 Edwards was elected to the House of Commons and reelected the following year. In 1815 he succeeded his lifelong friend and relative, Nathaniel Macon, in the United States House of Representatives, in which he served for the next eleven years before retiring to private life for a time.

Edwards returned to politics in 1833 as a state senator and continued at this post until 1844. He played a major role in the Constitutional Convention of 1835. He had two pet projects in this convention, but both were defeated. He tried to get the state to drop the religious

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[4]J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, "Bartholomew Figures Moore," ibid., V, 275-286.

oath for office and he opposed giving the western counties in the state increased political representation.

After six more years of retirement, Edwards returned to the state senate, presiding over this body in the tempestuous year of 1850. After retiring again following this session, he reentered politics when the Convention of 1861 was called. As a delegate, he was an ardent secessionist. He was elected presiding officer of the convention, conducting four sessions in an orderly manner.

In 1862, he prepared and published the memoirs of Nathaniel Macon. Edwards remained in private life and was not severely hurt economically by the war. He lived through North Carolina Reconstruction and died at the age of eighty-five at his home in Warren County.[5]

David Lowery Swain was born on January 4, 1801, near Asheville, North Carolina. He was taught at home and at the age of fifteen went to nearby Newton Academy. In 1821 he entered the University of North Carolina as a junior, but for some reason remained for only four months. He then went to Raleigh to study law. Admitted to the bar in December, 1822, Swain returned to Buncombe County. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1824 and remained there until 1830 when he was elected a Superior Court judge

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[5]Samuel A. Ashe, "Weldon N. Edwards," ibid., I, 265-269.

from the Edenton District. In 1832 Swain resigned his judgeship as he was elected governor, as a Clay disciple, at the tender age of thirty-one.

After his reelection as governor, he was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1835. His term as governor over, Swain assumed the office of President of the University of North Carolina. From a meagre institution with a student body of ninety, Swain built up the school to an enrollment of almost 500 at the outbreak of the Civil War.

During the war, he kept the doors of the University open almost single-handedly. After the collapse of the Confederacy, Swain went often to Washington to help North Carolina be readmitted into the Union. On this mission, as well as others, he met often with President Johnson. In 1865 he resumed the Presidency of the University, but was dismissed in the summer of 1868. As a result of being thrown from a buggy some two weeks earlier, he died on August 27, 1868.[6]

Matthias Evans Manly, the brother of the noted Charles Manly, was born in April, 1801, near Pittsboro in Chatham County. Matthias attended the University of North

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[6]Samuel A. Ashe, "David Lowery Swain," ibid., I, 447-457.

Carolina, graduating in 1824. He tutored at the University briefly, studied law under his brother, and then moved to New Bern to practice.

Manly remained at his practice and did not enter politics. In 1840 he was appointed to the Superior Court and remained at this post for nineteen years. Upon Thomas Ruffin's retirement from the Supreme Court in 1859, Judge Manly was appointed to succeed him.

During the war, he did little to distinguish himself as a jurist on the Supreme Court. Manly was devoted to the Southern cause and refused to admit the legality of the repeal of the secession ordinance after the war. Because of his Confederate sympathies, he was not elected to the Court in 1865. However, he became a state senator in 1866 and presided over that body. At the 1866 session, he was elected United States Senator, but was denied his seat in the Senate, as were the other "Southern Brigadiers" who presented themselves at that time. Manly returned to his law practice and served as mayor of New Bern. As the result of a stroke, Manly died on July 9, 1881.[7]

John Motley Morehead, born in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, on the auspicious day of July 4, 1796, lived in

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[7]Samuel A. Ashe, "Matthias Evans Manly," ibid., VI, 357-365.

Rockingham County, North Carolina, from 1798 until 1821. Making the best of poor educational opportunities near his home, he attended the University of North Carolina and graduated in 1817. After studying law under Archibald D. Murphy, Morehead began to practice in Rockingham County. In 1821 he moved to Greensboro, where he spent the rest of his life.

Morehead entered politics, being elected a representative to the House of Commons from both Rockingham and Guilford Counties. In 1840, as a Whig candidate for governor, Morehead won the office by some 8,000 votes. In 1842 he ran again and won, although his margin this time was only 5,000.

In 1848, Morehead presided over the National Whig Convention and hoped to secure the nomination for Henry Clay. He failed at this, but began a successful career as creator and organizer of the North Carolina Railroad, which proved to be a great personal triumph.

As a Whig and Union man, Morehead went with Chief Justice Ruffin, Ex-Governor David S. Reid, George Davis, and Daniel M. Barringer to the 1861 Peace Convention in Washington. When the convention failed, he recognized secession as inevitable and served in the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States.

At the end of the war, he lost a share of his for-

tune, but was not bankrupted. He had invested comparatively lightly in slaves due to his wife's abolitionist leanings. His health broke in 1866, but he retained his mental vigor until his death in August of that year.[8]

A native of Guilford County, Jonathan Worth was born on November 18, 1802. He attended local schools including Caldwell Institute in Greensboro. Worth then studied law with the famous Archibald D. Murphy, obtaining his license to practice in 1824. He soon settled in Asheboro.

An extremely shy man, he managed to overcome his timidity by severe self discipline. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1830 and subsequently reelected the following year. He withdrew from politics in favor of his law practice and acquired a great deal of wealth from it. In 1840 he ran on the Harrison ticket for the state senate and was elected. The following year, he was defeated when he ran for Congress. In 1845 he tried again for the House of Representatives and was again defeated.

In 1858 Worth resigned as clerk and master in equity for Randolph County and ran for the state senate, this time being victorious. Reelected in 1860, he fought against

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[8] C. Alphonso Smith, "John Motley Morehead," ibid., II, 250-258.

secession. In the special session of 1861, he voted against the secession ordinance and refused to be a candidate for the secession convention. He did help the South after the break with the Union had been accomplished, but only after he had completely dissociated himself from the originators of the movement.

In 1862 Worth was elected state treasurer. He continued at this post under Provisional Governor William W. Holden, but resigned to become himself a candidate for governor against Holden in 1865. He won and worked unceasingly to try to help North Carolina regain her economic and political prosperity. He was removed from office in 1868 and died a year later in Raleigh on September 5, 1868.[9]

Edward Conigland was born in Donigal County, Ireland, on April 22, 1819. His father was a prosperous physician, but died when the boy was fourteen. In 1834 Edward and the remaining members of his family came to the United States and settled in New York City.

In New York, Conigland studied law. He also excelled as a mathematician and linguist. He went to Halifax, North Carolina, to tutor and in 1846 obtained a license to practice law in the state. He established his practice in

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[9]J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, "Jonathan Worth," ibid., III, 435-453.

Halifax and became both famous and wealthy. His best known role was as defense attorney for William Holden during the 1871 impeachment trial of the governor.

Conigland was not an ardent secessionist and served neither in the armed forces nor as an official during the Civil War. Nevertheless, he morally supported the Confederacy. His death came in a tragic accident in 1877 when he was run down by a freight train near his home.[10]

Edward J. Hale was born on his father's plantation in Chatham County in 1802. He was tutored at home and then placed with Joseph Gales of the Raleigh Register to learn how to edit a newspaper. Soon after, he went to Washington and was a member of the staff of the famous National Intelligencer.

A strong Whig, he was a loyal follower of Henry Clay. In 1825 Hale bought the Carolina Observer and published under the name of the Fayetteville Observer until 1865 when he had to flee the advancing Union army in order to save his personal valuables. In 1860 Hale had supported John Bell for the Presidency and was very much against secession, but finally supported the Confederacy. The war ruined him financially and he left North Carolina. With

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[10]William C. Allen, History of Halifax County (Boston: Cornhill Company, 1948), pp. 194-195.

the aid of friends he established a printing house in New York City under the name of E. J. Hale and Sons. He died on January 1, 1883.[11]

Walter Clark was born in Halifax County on August 19, 1846. His father, David, had been a very wealthy planter and an avid disciple of Henry Clay. Walter was a student until the outbreak of the war. He became a drill instructor and later was actively fighting at the age of sixteen. He managed to enter the University of North Carolina during the war and graduated in 1864. He then returned to the army to serve with distinction.

After the war, Clark went to New York and Washington to study for the bar. He was admitted in 1867 and developed an excellent business and practice in Halifax. He was an active Democrat and as a candidate for office lost twice to the Republicans. After Reconstruction, Clark became an editor, historian, and finally Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, his career continuing until the year of 1924 when he died.[12]

Of the eleven men here, six of them attended the University of North Carolina. Nine of them were lawyers,

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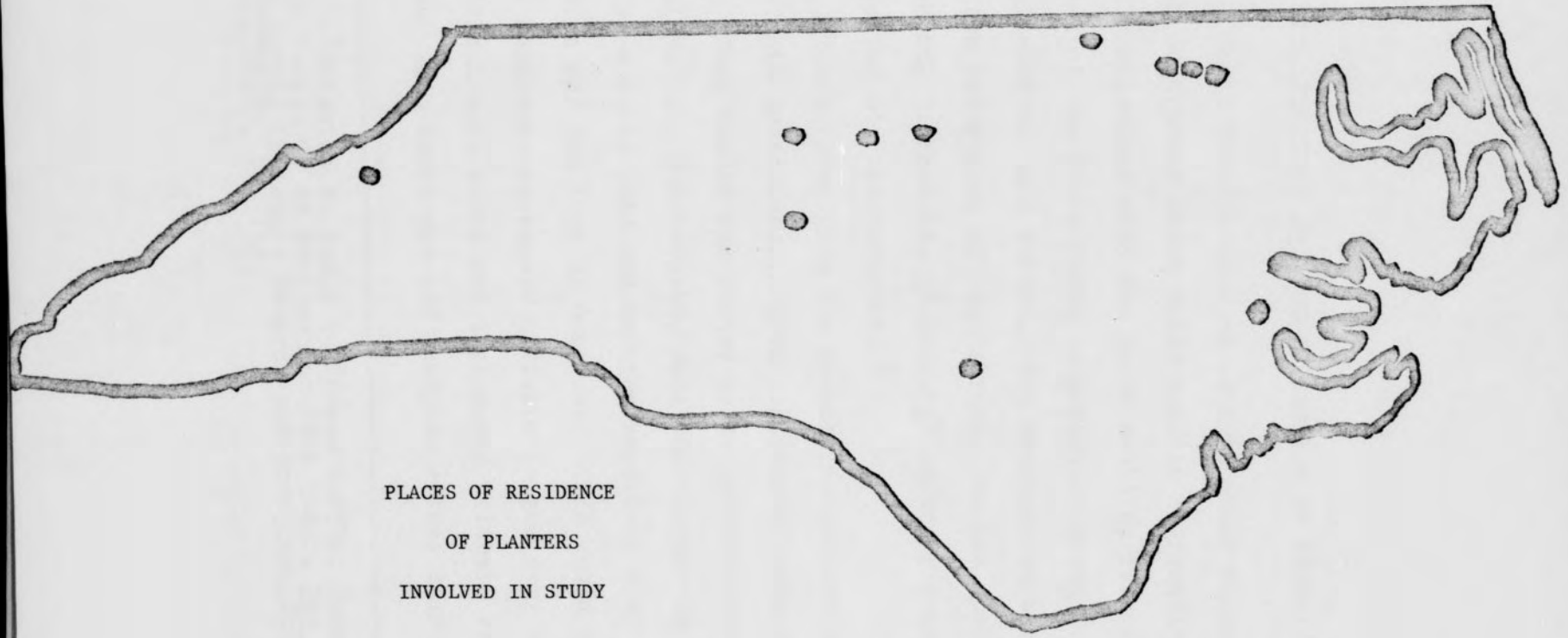
[11]Samuel A. Ashe, "Edward J. Hale," Biographical History, VIII, 179-184.

[12]Samuel A. Ashe, "Walter Clark," ibid., VII, 67-76.

two were governors before the Civil War and one after, and three served as judges on the North Carolina Supreme Court. Six served in the House of Commons and two served on the Board of Trustees for the University of North Carolina. Six were antisecessionists, two were for secession, and two could best be classified as middle-of-the-roaders. One, Clark, was too young at the outbreak of the war to be considered although he did serve in the Confederate army.

Five of the men lived in the coastal plain region, five in the Piedmont, and one in the mountain region. Although they had varying backgrounds to some extent, the similarities of their positions and views usually were more marked than their differences. The thoughts of these eleven men were not always an accurate cross section of the planter thinking in general, but they were suggestive of the course of action that the majority of planters in the state would take.



PLACES OF RESIDENCE

OF PLANTERS

INVOLVED IN STUDY

III. POLITICS AND THE CONVENTION OF 1865-1866

North Carolinians, as well as other Southerners, thought that their state would quickly be readmitted and amicable relations with the Union would be resumed. The occupant of the White House, a native of North Carolina, was believed to be a friend. But Southerners worried about the intentions of the Cabinet. As one observer expressed it, "I fear his /Johnson's/ dextrous yankee foes will fetter him inextricably."[1]

The Johnson plan for Reconstruction was similar to that of his predecessor. Both men sought leniency for the South. They wanted the states to be quickly returned to the Union. All Southerners, save the leaders in the rebellion, were to be pardoned if they agreed to obey the Constitution and the laws of Congress. This would include all former Confederates except officers in the army above the rank of colonel, civil and diplomatic officers of the Confederacy, and those who had resigned either commissions in

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[1]Matthias E. Manly to Thomas Ruffin, December 4, 1866 in Joseph G. de Roulhac Hamilton (ed.), The Papers of Thomas Ruffin (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1920), IV, 137.

the United States armed forces or judicial and congressional posts to aid the Confederacy. If ten per cent of any state's voting population of 1860 took the required oath of loyalty, a state government would be organized. Then the states should ratify the Thirteenth Amendment and elect Congressmen. Just as soon as law and order were restored in the South, the military forces would withdraw and normal relations would be resumed. Johnson, after Lincoln's assassination, sought to implement this plan, first in North Carolina.

On May 29, 1865, Andrew Johnson appointed William W. Holden as provisional governor of North Carolina. Holden assumed his duties on June 5, and immediately tried to re-establish civil government in the state. In less than two months, he appointed magistrates for eighty-five counties, forty mayors and commissioners, Supreme and Superior Court justices, and state directors for railroads and banks. Among these appointees, only one secession Democrat, Judge Matthias E. Manly, was given a post.[2]

Holden turned to the calling of a convention. Suffrage for delegates to the Convention was based on requirements of 1860 except for the poll tax. The election for

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[2]Samuel A. Ashe, History of North Carolina (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1925), II, 1020.

delegates was held on September 21 and the Convention assembled on October 2.

The two most pressing problems of the Convention were the abrogation of slavery and the repeal of the ordinance of secession. The Convention also had to act on election of officers, judicial proceedings, and currency reforms. The Convention sped through these considerations and adjourned on October 20 until May 24, 1866.[3]

Provisional Governor Holden rapidly became unpopular with the people. Jonathan Worth, treasurer under Holden, resigned his post and declared himself an anti-administration candidate for governor on October 18.[4] Worth beat Holden in the election by a vote of 31,643 to 25,704.[5]

The newly elected legislature met November 27. The speakership of the house went to Samuel F. Phillips without opposition and Thomas Little, after much bickering, became the president of the senate. Holden, still acting governor, submitted the Thirteenth Amendment for ratification and favorable action was taken quickly. Then Jonathan Worth was

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[3]Joseph G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina (New York: Longman's, Green and Company, 1914), pp. 120-132.

[4]Raleigh (North Carolina) Sentinel, October 18, 1865 in Joseph G. de Roulhac Hamilton, The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1909), I, 436-440 and Jonathan Worth to William W. Holden, October 18, 1865, in ibid., I, 434-435.

[5]Ashe, North Carolina, II, 1031.

sworn in as governor on December 15 and the legislature elected United States Senators--William A. Graham and John Pool. The legislature adjourned on December 18 until February.

Holden tried to block Worth from taking office by charging him with being a secessionist, but to no avail. Holden was notified by Johnson to turn over the state seal to Worth and this was done on December 28. As the provisional government did not exist, Holden's appointees no longer held authority. To remedy this, Worth called a special session of the legislature which met on January 18, 1866. At the session, special attention was given to the freedmen, and North Carolina's Black Code was passed on March 10. Soon afterwards, the legislature adjourned.

During this special session, the state's Congressmen had been turned away from Congress and the seeds of Radical Reconstruction were being sown. The Radicals had a different plan for Reconstruction than Andrew Johnson's. They thought that the Congress, not the President, should institute the conditions upon which the Southern States would return to the Union. The Radicals, contrary to Johnson, did not believe that the South was loyal or that it would treat the freedmen fairly. Therefore, some of the whites should be disfranchised and the ballot given to the Negro so that he could protect himself politically. Al-

though the men holding these views were at first in the minority, in time the election of 1866 would decide if their power would be sufficiently increased so that should they disagree with President Johnson, they would have the votes with which to override his veto. It was in this context that the second session of the Convention tackled the issue of a new constitution for North Carolina.

On May 24, the Convention reconvened and immediately bitter debate arose when it became obvious that a new constitution would be adopted. Some thought that a new constitution should be embraced in order to placate the Radicals in Congress. Others believed that the Convention was not duly authorized to rewrite the state's constitution and that the Convention should meet and adjourn sine die. Since the issue affected the planter, he exerted his influence, seeking a favorable outcome. But the planter did not see the issue clearly as the post-Civil War period "was, in fact, an abnormal time, and like all anomalous situations, it forced the principal participants into ambiguous and self-contradictory positions."[6] The planter group brought extraneous and irrelevant arguments into the debate about the Constitution.

The Convention did adopt a new constitution and

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[6]Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 536.

immediately Thomas Ruffin, of Alamance County, and Edward Conigland, of Halifax, attacked its validity. Judge Ruffin argued that the Convention was not called in the proper way. Also, the President had usurped the powers of North Carolina by excluding some of the voters.[7] Only a part of the people had called the Convention. Ruffin then argued that because of this, even if the Constitution were approved by the people, it was still not legitimate.[8] To bolster his argument, Ruffin said that constitutional theory is destroyed if a disenchanted electorate can write its own constitution. He contended this would be not unlike having a referundum on every piece of legislation.[9]

Edward Conigland concurred with this conservative argument. He thought that the brilliant letter of the former North Carolina Supreme Court Justice should be published

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[7]Ruffin is referring to the $20,000 exception in particular. President Johnson had proclaimed on May 29, 1865, "all persons who have voluntarily participated in said rebellion and the estimated value of whose taxable property is over $20,000" were not allowed to vote. Henry Steele Commager, Documents of American History (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1958), II, 8.

[8]Ruffin was referring to ex parte Dorr (1845) in which a rival faction to the incumbent government wrote a constitution in Rhode Island in 1841 and had it passed in a referendum. The Supreme Court disallowed this constitution because it had not been written by a duly authorized body.

[9]The preceding argument is found in Ruffin's letter to Edward Conigland, July 2, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 62-71.

and used as a weapon to defeat the proposed Constitution. Conigland convinced Ruffin that the letter would significantly aid their cause ("Your name . . . has infinitely more weight than the name of any other living man in N. C."[10]) and Ruffin reluctantly allowed the letter to be published in the Wilmington Journal.[11]

The first reply to Ruffin's letter appeared in the Old North State by Lewis Hanes.[12] Hanes used a long, roundabout argument to prove that the Constitution was valid. First, a state cannot secede and the laws passed after May 20, 1861, the date of the secession ordinance, were nullities. Civil government was not destroyed, only the laws that the government had enacted. The United States should have recognized the state government as a de facto government. Since the Constitution of the state was still operative, if a de facto government had been recognized, then a convention could have been called and the de facto government would have ceased to exist as of that moment. However, this was not the case. The United States did not recognize a de facto government; still a convention

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[10]Edward Conigland to Thomas Ruffin, July 11, 1866 in ibid., p. 73.

[11]Later it appeared in the Raleigh Sentinel.

[12]Lewis Hanes had been private secretary to William Holden when the latter was provisional governor.

was needed. Had the state waited until a convention had been called in the prescribed manner, there would have never been a convention. Hence, the Provisional Governor called one--in a most irregular manner. Nevertheless, it was still a regular Convention called "by extraordinary authority in the absence of the regularly constituted authorities of the State." Thus, the Dorr case, ex parte Dorr (1845), which Ruffin had cited as a precedent, was irrelevant. Finally, in regard to the restriction of voters which Ruffin had mentioned, Hanes estimated that only about two thousand had been excluded and that as of the date of his reply to Ruffin, most of them could vote.[13]

The debate on the validity of the Constitution continued. William A. Allen, of Duplin County, treated Ruffin's argument in a different manner. Allen conceded that if the antisecession ordinance was valid, then Ruffin's argument was true. But North Carolina had been "deprived of all civil government" by President Johnson's proclamation. The Constitution of the state was not in effect and there was "no mode prescribed by which the convention could be called ...." The state must therefore remain under military rule; and the convention, seen in its true light, was an expedient and "the proper course for the people of the State... is to

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[13]Salisbury (North Carolina) Old North State, July 24, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 84-90.

vote for or against it upon its merits." Allen said that he himself would vote against it.[14]

Bartholomew F. Moore shed some light on this vexatious problem in a letter to the Raleigh Sentinel. He pointed out that if the convention was illegal, the logical alternative would be that Zebulon B. Vance was still governor and the rebel legislature was legal. This idea was intolerable since the Union had fought a war to conquer the rebels and it would have been ridiculous to reinstate them as soon as they were beaten. Was the Constitution illegal because the President had barred certain individuals from the polls? No, because it was reasonable for the President to keep men whom he considered traitors from voting.[15]

Moore's argument irritated Ruffin and Conigland, apparently because they found it effective, as its logic was convincing. The basic issue was that if the Convention was illegal, did an organized government exist?[16] An answer was never needed as the majority of voters accepted the validity of the Convention and defeated the Constitu-

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[14]Letter to the editor, Wilmington (North Carolina) Journal, July 22, 1866 in ibid., IV, 80-84.

[15]Letter to the editor, Raleigh Sentinel, September 12, 1866 in ibid., IV, 120-130.

[16]Edward Conigland to Thomas Ruffin, August 27, 1866 in ibid., IV, 118-119.

tion, 21,552 to 19,570.[17]

The enigma posed to these men was similar to that of the national leaders. The central problem was to define the status of the states. If a state could secede, then the territory of the erstwhile Confederacy could be treated in any manner which the victor desired. If a state could not secede, then the question arose over what to do with the governments of the various states which had "rebelled."

The planters of North Carolina were divided on this question. From the juridical standpoint, Ruffin was convincing in his analysis of the legitimacy of the Convention. But his argument was based upon governmental procedures in times of normalcy. The secession ordinance created an extraordinary and bizarre situation. His argument for the illegality of the Convention was probably rejected because it was illusory; Ruffin failed to take into account the fact that there had indeed been secession and an organized rebellion. That normal relations existed was certainly not the case. If the Convention of 1866 was illegal merely because it stepped beyond its prescribed bounds, the validity of the Convention of 1787 could be challenged. Ruffin probably would not have admitted that the Convention of

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[17]Ashe, North Carolina, II, 1037.

1787 was illegal. And so, the descrepancy between theory and fact remained unseen by the planter.

If Ruffin's ideas were good political theory, then Hanes' were excellent for political practice. North Carolina had tried to secede and had failed. This unsuccessful rebellion allowed the United States government to treat the state as it saw fit. The best course might have been to recognize a de jure government, but such action was not mandatory. Therefore, North Carolina had to do the best it could with an unpleasant situation, which meant to recognize the Convention as de facto and vote upon its product--the Constitution.

The debate about the validity of the Constitution served to point out the fact that the planters' political theories were not in touch with the realities of the times in which they were living. From another point of view, had they all agreed upon one or another interpretation of the legality of the Convention, this still would not have solved the real problems of the day. They spent sorely needed energy in the wrong direction and had less resources to cope with other, more important matters.

One of these was the problem of the state's war debt which came up in the first session of the Convention. At first merely a state matter, the issue mushroomed into national prominence because of the stand which President

Johnson had taken. There had been the foregone conclusion that the state would not cancel its debt. Suddenly Holden came out against paying it (he had previously favored retaining it) and the convention was thrown into an uproar. It seems that Johnson wrote to Holden and advised him to make sure that the state did cancel the war debt.[18] The Convention at first tabled the war debt bill, but later legislated that all debts incurred by the rebel government were not to be paid; a further provision stated that no future legislatures could reverse this decision.[19]

Cancellation of the war debt caused serious problems to the University of North Carolina, the Literary Fund, banks, and those who had purchased state bonds during the war.[20] The vested interests, accountably, were against repudiation, but were joined by other groups. The most cogent argument voiced against paying the debt was the sim-

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[18]See John Hope Franklin, Reconstruction After the Civil War (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 41.

[19]Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, pp. 128-133.

[20]Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, North Carolina; the History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), p. 456 and Daniel Jay Whitener, "Public Education in North Carolina During Reconstruction, 1865-1876," in Fletcher Melvin Green (ed.), Essays in Southern History Presented to J. G. de R. Hamilton by His Former Students at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), pp. 71-90.

plest--the citizens of North Carolina should not be taxed to pay a debt incurred while the state was in rebellion. Vis-a-vis this point of view was a similarly uncomplicated statement that cancellation would bring economic ruin to many innocent people.[21]

It was economically inexpedient to repudiate the war debt. However, those who would have been paid, out of future taxes, would have gained from secession. This was psychologically unacceptable if secession was illegal. President Johnson took the position that a person investing in the interests of secession must not gain. Furthermore, he noted that those adversely affected by the repudiation were not innocent victims; they had wittingly invested in rebellion. Johnson thought that they must be punished economically for their mistaken ideas.

Most leaders recognized that the long range effects of cancellation of a debt were likely to be serious. The assumption was that the abrogation of the debt by North Carolina would keep investors out of the state. An investor

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[21]Some of the planters were holders of state bonds which would be worthless. Worth, for one, was violently against repudiation, "If you repudiate the whole war debt you break every bank in the state, you destroy the University and common schools . . ., you beggar nearly a thousand widows and orphans . . ., and you blot out of our constellation its bright star--Honesty." Jonathan Worth to Jesse Walker, September 14, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Jonathan Worth, I, 420 and Jonathan Worth to R. S. French, August 18, 1865 in ibid., p. 394.

needed assurance that the money he entrusted to others would be safe. When North Carolina cancelled its debt, investors would become wary lest they lose their money by another cancellation in the future. The trouble that cancellation might bring notwithstanding, North Carolina repudiated her debt, but in reality quickly regained her credit standing and investors began once more to put their capital into the state.

The Convention of 1865-1866 tried to cope with the most pressing problems which confronted the state. It acted, sometimes wisely and sometimes not, and adjourned sine die in June, 1866. The work of the Convention was a campaign issue when Worth ran for reelection in October, 1866. His opponent was Alfred Dockery--a Holden Candidate. Dockery never formally accepted his nomination, but ran anyway and was soundly thrashed by Worth, 34,250 to 10,759.[22]

The new legislature met on November 17 and R. Y. McAden was elected Speaker of the House. Matthias E. Manly was chosen to succeed Pool, whose term soon expired, as United States Senator. The next action taken by the legislature, on the advice of President Johnson, was to pass a proposal to reject the Fourteenth Amendment. The vote was overwhelming, 45 to 1 in the Senate and 93 to 10 in the

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[22]Ashe, North Carolina, p. 1046.

House.[23]

The legislature then passed a resolution to send a commission to Washington to try to get President Johnson to restrain General Daniel E. Sickles from interfering with the local courts. Another commission was selected on January 2, 1867, to try to obtain a reduction of the land tax. A resolution passed on March 1 for a national convention of the states. This convention tried to adopt stringent property and educational requirements for voting in place of the Fourteenth Amendment. On March 4, the legislature adjourned until the third Monday in August. However, this group never met again, for two days prior, Congress had enacted the Military Reconstruction Act which would territorialize the "conquered provinces."

Despite their esoteric theorizing on whether or not the constitution was legal, the planters in North Carolina during early Reconstruction usually thought in terms of the practical. The daily worries about economic survival afforded little time for political speculation. The entire political theory of secession had been crushed on the battlefield. The Southern states, North Carolina included, had by 1866 "drunk the cup of surrender and had disbanded their armies. They had repudiated the Southern debt, had solemnly renounced

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[23]Ibid., p. 1047.

secession, had accepted the antislavery amendment. This they thought would be the end."[24]

It was not the end; in fact it was only the beginning. But before the blow of Radical Reconstruction descended upon the planter, he had to face many other pressing problems.

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[24]Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 596.

IV. RECONSTRUCTION THEORISTS--NATIONAL AND STATE

Conquered people usually have variegated thoughts as regards their conquerors. Normally after a military struggle there is an intense hatred for the victor by the defeated. North Carolina, greatly injured by the war, suffered the institution of martial law, loss of state representation, and the imprisonment of its war governor, as well as other inconveniences of early Reconstruction. Added to this injury was the implied insult which one twentieth century writer noted, "It was more or less tacitly recognized that the prewar leadership of the Southern slavocrat in national politics was permanently to be replaced in favor of Northern direction."[1] In addition to these bothersome policies, the planter, at least temporarily, was denied the right to vote if he had accumulated wealth over $20,000. Was the North Carolina planter resentful toward these methods of Reconstruction or did he accept them as a part of military defeat?

The issue that affected the planter most immediately after the war was that of pardons. Without the pardon, "he could not buy or sell, preach a sermon or practice law,

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[1]Paul Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1947), p. 9.

apply for a copyright or patent, vote or participate in the government in any fashion, . . . and he could not recover his property if it had been confiscated."[2] With many delays in the receiving of pardons, the planter began to believe that politics was interfering with the granting of them. The person on whom blame was affixed was Provisional Governor Holden as it was Holden's duty to recommend or to withhold recommendation of applications for pardons which were then to be forwarded to President Johnson for final approval.[3]

Governor Holden seemed to have been recommending early advocates of secession for pardon until opposition arose from men who had not been early secessionists, but who had joined the cause later. Then it became difficult for anyone to obtain a pardon because Holden was treading in dangerous political waters no matter whom he recommended. Tod R. Caldwell, later to become governor when Holden was impeached, had spoken to Holden in regard to pardoning Paul C. Cameron and told the latter:

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[2]Coulter, The South During Reconstruction, p. 32.

[3]The best work on pardons is Jonathan T. Dorris, Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), on page 192, Holden is quoted as saying that during his seven months as provisional governor, "about twelve hundred pardons (1,200), as well as I recollect, were thus obtained."

> A cry has been raised against him [Holden] that he is too lenient. . . . The more wealthy and influential secessionists were considered the greatest offenders and should consequently be the last to receive favors.[4]

It was advisable, Caldwell thought, that Cameron publicly renounce the doctrine of secession in order to speed up the process of obtaining a pardon.

David Swain, a former Governor, thought that the pardon had been "more sparingly used in North Carolina than elsewhere," but he probably felt that way because he had not yet received his pardon.[5] Although Holden was blamed for the scarcity of pardons granted, the sheer weight of them probably caused as much delay, at first, as party politics. Nonetheless, by the state election of 1865 more than 600 prominent North Carolina men out of several thousand applicants had been pardoned.[6]

The pardon issue harassed the planter, but was not a serious menace to him. There was a general recognition

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[4]Tod R. Caldwell to Paul C. Cameron, August 17, 1865 in Duncan Cameron Papers (Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina).

[5]David L. Swain to Thomas Ruffin, September 15, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 28. Actually Cameron had seen Holden the day before in regard to pardons for Swain, Ruffin, and himself and had been told that they would probably receive them in fifteen days (although this was not to be true) signed by "Andrew the 2nd," as Cameron put it.

[6]Franklin, Reconstruction After the Civil War, pp. 33-34. This disagrees with Holden's estimate, although Franklin is figuring as of September 21 while Holden includes October, November, and December, 1865. See preceding page, note 3.

that pardons would be granted to all, sooner or later, so that it was just a matter of time. However, having to apply for a pardon was an irritant and embarrassment, which, along with others of more importance, helped cause a bitterness toward the entire idea of Presidential Reconstruction.

The authority to grant pardons rested with the President. Andrew Johnson, although a Southerner himself, was surrounded by men of Northern persuasion whose feelings toward the South were less sympathetic than the President's. Because Congress was not in session, the task of Reconstruction rested on the shoulders of the President and his top advisors.[7] Therefore, Johnson needed planter cooperation if his program for Reconstruction was to succeed. Paradoxically, if the planter showed overwhelming support for Johnson, the more radical elements in the North could point to this and say that since the Southerners relished the Johnson plan of Reconstruction, the President must not really be reconstructing the South. If Johnson received no support from the planter, it was because the planter felt that his policies were too strong; if he received too much support, it proved that his actions were not

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[7]Unless, of course, Johnson chose to call a special session of Congress, which he did not do.

strong enough.

While President Johnson was betwixt and between, the planter was in a similar situation. The planter probably could not recognize the fact that his reactions and statements might influence the course of Reconstruction. What the planter thought and said about Johnson, his policies, his allies, and the North in general was very important.

David Swain, who had spoken to Johnson personally on a number of occasions, liked the President.[8] Ex-Governor Swain received the impression that Johnson wanted Tennessee to be a model in Reconstruction for the other states. The two men differed about Reconstruction. Swain disagreed with Johnson who insisted that since the United States had to guarantee to the states a republican form of government, it must reconstruct the "whole fabric of government, by the hands of loyal men."[9] Swain feared that this might mean that the men who knew most about government would be excluded.

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[8]Cornelia P. Spencer spoke with Swain and wrote in her diary that "his judgment of President Johnson is rather favorable . . . . He will probably act as fairly to the South as can be expected." Also, "Governor Swain says that he thinks that President Johnson is in earnest to do the South justice, and will give her her rights if man can do anything." Quoted in Hope Summerell Chamberlain, Old Days in Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926), pp. 114, 121.

[9]David L. Swain to Thomas Ruffin, September 15, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, p. 28.

On another trip to secure pardons, Swain reiterated his amity for Johnson and disagreed less with Johnson's plans as he became familiar with the ideas of the members of the Cabinet. Swain thought that Johnson could bring the Cabinet around to see the President's point of view concerning what was to be done in Reconstruction.[10]

The opinion of the planter toward Johnson was not overwhelmingly in favor of the President. Certainly Johnson's ideas of Reconstruction would be more agreeable to the planter than those of the Radicals. But most of the planters were more conservative than the President. In attacking his program, they failed to recognize two factors. First, the South was defeated as a result of an overt action which was officially defined as a rebellion. As a defeated power, she could be dealt with accordingly. Second, if the planters chose to oppose Johnson, what alternative could they expect? Certainly the North was not likely to accede to the South's wishes. This had been proven by the war itself. It could not be expected that the North would, at the end of the war, simply accept the situation as it was ante bellum. If Johnson failed in his attempts to reconstruct the South, the ensuing policies would probably, almost surely, swing to

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[10]David L. Swain to Thomas Ruffin, November 13, 1865 and November 24, 1865 in ibid., IV, 38, 41.

the left.

Most planters made the mistake of opposing Johnson. After the President's message about the admittance of loyal representatives to the Union was cautiously worded, Matthias E. Manly spoke of Johnson's policies unfavorably:

> The President's policy is a compromise and like all compromises partakes more or less of error . . . . I do not think the President a man of great ability or genius and I fear his dextrous yankee foes will fetter him inextricably.[11]

Jonathan Worth, Governor from 1865 to 1868, was apprehensive about the path early Reconstruction was taking, but retained his confidence in the Northern people. In his inaugural address, he said of them, "The great body of them do not entertain towards us the destroying malevolence which /one/ would infer from the speeches of many of their intemperate partisan leaders and a portion of the press."[12] Worth thought that Reconstruction by the Radicals, should it come, would not last:

> We shall find, in the most conservative feature of our government, the Judiciary, a shield against the most Revolutionary plans of Congress . . . of territorializing the State.[13]

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[11]Matthias E. Manly to Thomas Ruffin, December 4, 1866 in ibid., IV, 137. Manly's prediction was quite correct.

[12]North Carolina, Public Documents of North Carolina, 1866-1867 (Raleigh: William E. Prell, 1867) Doc. 25, p. 4.

[13]Jonathan Worth to Thomas Ruffin, January 7, 1867 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 142.

The planter, like most other Southerners, wanted North Carolina to be admitted into the Union as rapidly as possible. There were some who traditionally misunderstood the North and remained naive about the outcome of the war and the relationship of the state to the Union. Nathaniel Boyden, of the North Carolina Railroad, while offering a free pass to Thomas Ruffin for his use, remarked parenthetically:

> Indeed I always looked upon the ordinance of secession as an act of Rebellion and supposed that when or as soon as the Rebellion was put down, we were then restored to our legitimate and original position in the union.[14]

As Mr. Boyden and the South were to find out, the North did not agree with such a simple solution to the Civil War.

Readmittance to the Union was so important that David Swain advised political expediency to obtain reunification:

> I earnestly desire a speedy return to the Union and to secure it am disposed for a brief interval to submit to any rule, and yield obedience to those who claim authority and have the power to enforce it.[15]

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[14]Nathaniel Boyden to Thomas Ruffin, September 16, 1865 in ibid., IV, 31. Many Southerners felt this way, "After having fought heroically for their independence, Southerners, in defeat, now claimed that they had never legally been out of the Union." Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 536.

[15]David L. Swain to Thomas Ruffin, September 15, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 29.

Likewise, Weldon N. Edwards saw the ambiguous position of the state. He commented, somewhat sarcastically, about North Carolina's position:

> Our condition as a State is strangely anomalous. We are in, and we are out of the Union. All the Departments of the Federal Govt. have recognized us a state, and yet the Doors of Congress are slammed in the face of our Members of Congress. What then becomes of the great American Principle, that Representation and taxation are unseparable?[16]

Not only was Edwards perplexed about the status of the state, many constitutional experts were a little befuddled. The more radical of the Republicans alleged that the Southern states had committed "suicide" by their act of secession. Misunderstanding, which had played such a great role in causing the war, remained in its aftermath.

Although no generalization can be made about what the planter thought of Johnson or all Northerners, the planters were unanimous in their condemnation of the Northern Radicals. Weldon N. Edwards graphically summed it up when he told Ruffin that "things look ugly at Washington."[17] Walter Clark, of Halifax, more outspoken than others, called General William T. Sherman "a modern Attila." Clark com-

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[16]Weldon N. Edwards to Thomas Ruffin, January 24, 1866 in ibid., IV, 49.

[17]Weldon N. Edwards to Thomas Ruffin, December 4, 1866 in ibid., IV, 138.

pared the Radicals to French Revolutionists; Ben Wade to Charmette, Thaddeus Stevens to Robespierre, and Charles Sumner to Danton.[18] He went on to caution the South that this was no time for political nostrums, but urged the region to engage itself in building up its economy.[19]

The situation was looking more ominous as the national election of 1866 drew near. There was considerable consternation among planters about the outcome. Nevertheless, even after the Radicals gained the necessary votes to control the Congress over a Johnson veto, a few North Carolinians were hopeful that the President would prevail. Swain, for one, said:

> The skies are overcast and lowering in Washington, and no one can pronounce with much confidence what a radical Congress may or may not do. My faith in the firmness of the President remains unshaken.[20]

Turning to state politics, William Holden had been the Provisional Governor, appointed by Johnson, until the state elections of 1865. In part because of the pardon issue, the governor did not have the total support of the

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[18]Letter to the editor, Raleigh (North Carolina) Daily Sentinel, August 11, 1866.

[19]Ibid.

[20]David L. Swain to Thomas Ruffin, December 8, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 139.

planters who opposed him. The planters felt that he told them one thing and the President something else. Jonathan Worth wrote that Holden, during the former's administration,

> is operating with our external foes . . . to get power through the agency of the poor deluded negro . . . . I fear he will delude the masses of them as he has often deluded and misled the more intelligent whites.[21]

This remark was made two months before the Holden Convention which sought to organize the Republican Party in North Carolina. When the Convention met, Worth recognized the importance of it and the power which Holden could wield. Governor Worth felt that the Republican Party was a group of carpetbaggers and scalawags. They would seek to elect men who would do anything, even to ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment, to ensure North Carolina's return to the Union. Such a party, if backed by a Radical-controlled Congress would surely be "a most formidable combination."[22] Edward Conigland, avidly interested in public affairs, concurred in the description of Holden:

> I have no doubt whatever, that he, and such as he, are busy persuading the leading Radicals, that the Southern people are on the eve of another revolution, and the

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[21]Jonathan Worth to Thomas Ruffin, January 7, 1867 in ibid., IV, 142.

[22]Jonathan Worth to Thomas Ruffin, March 6, 1867 in ibid., IV, 176. This combination was formidable as it won the majority of delegates to a new convention called by General R. S. Canby. Holden won the governorship and was inaugurated on July 2, 1868 when Canby forcibly removed Worth from office.

> Radicals ask only the shadow of an excuse to put their plans in operation. The first purpose is to drive us again to the sword if possible.[23]

William Holden had been subservient to the wishes of the President. Governor Worth certainly was not. Nevertheless, the shadow of suspicion was cast upon Worth whenever he had dealings with Washington. In other words, anyone who was in a position of authority was suspected of duplicity. When Worth sent a commission to Washington in 1867 to try to stop military interference with the local courts, Matthias E. Manly thought that the commission's members had "most probably been playing into the hands of the usurpers."[24] By seeing evil and betrayal in every quarter, even to mistrusting Worth, the planters were fighting phantoms. The planters continued to exhibit a trait which they had developed during the era of the Old South--a constant fear of a conspiracy to rob them and destroy their society.

The more the planters blasted the Radicals, the more they played into the Radicals' hands. When the Radicals finally instituted their own form of Reconstruction, the planter felt hopeless to fight them, or if he wanted to fight,

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[23]Edward Conigland to Thomas Ruffin, July 20, 1866 in ibid., IV, 76-77.

[24]Matthias E. Manly to Thomas Ruffin, January 23, 1867 in ibid., IV, 147-148.

he was disfranchised so that he could not.[25] This created a political vacuum which the Republican Party soon filled. The state would go through the worst of Reconstruction, from the planter point of view, before the old leadership would begin to reassert itself.

Until the elections of 1866, or even the Act of March 2, 1867, the policies that would govern Reconstruction were not certain. The Radicals proved that they could control Congress and initiate their own reforms as a result of this election. This fact foreboded ill for the South, but the Southern planter could not be found innocent of the charge that he had inadvertently aided the Radical cause. Because of the failure of the Southern moderate to effect constructive reforms, the despised Radicals took things into their own hands--and with a vengeance. The South continued to berate the Radicals, but at the same time refused to look beneath the surface at its own failings.

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[25]See William A. Russ, Jr., "Radical Disfranchisement in North Carolina, 1867-1868," North Carolina Historical Review, (Raleigh, 1924-), XI (October, 1934), 271-283.

V. THE PLANTER AND THE FREEDMAN--POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

After the Civil War, both the planter and the Negro had to undergo profound changes in thinking about their relationship. The planter realized that slavery no longer existed, but could not accept the idea that the slave's freedom was beneficial to anyone.[1] "Was ever such a crime committed against humanity as by their liberation?" asked Weldon N. Edwards.[2]

In the planter's mind there was no doubt that the Negro was inferior. Freedom could not make him the political equal of the white man. To ensure this idea, the planter vigorously backed the Black Code. This legalized social control which would inhibit Negro activity. The statutes were designed to give the freedman privileges and rights similar to those the free Negro in North Carolina had enjoyed before Emancipation.[3] North Carolina's Black

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[1]"A huge majority of the best citizens of the South . . . accepted the result of the Civil War," according to William H. Skaggs, The Southern Oligarchy (New York: Devan-Adair Company, 1924), p. 70.

[2]Weldon N. Edwards to Thomas Ruffin, October 11, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 134.

[3]The Black Codes were "designed to force Negroes to labor on the plantations under conditions imposed by the planters," asserts James S. Allen in Reconstruction: The

Code was "one of the most tolerant" to be found in the Southern states.[4] Among the more important provisions were that former masters were to have the first choice of former slaves for apprentices; slave marriages were legalized; a white person must witness sales or transactions of more than ten dollars if the parties were Negroes; a Negro could not testify against a white person unless the latter agreed to it; and a Negro rape of a white was punishable by death.[5] Such legislation, as social control devices, was more subtle, or maybe less subtle, than slavery had been.

The Black Code was not passed until March, 1866. Before and after passage of these statutes, the freedman began to assert himself politically and economically. In addition to trying to secure the vote and fair labor contracts, he was seeking access to the witness stand so that his testimony would be admissible as evidence in court. Although access to the witness stand by the Negro was not desirable to the planter, he did not completely oppose this action.[6] On the

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Battle for Democracy, 1865-1876 (New York: International Publisher, 1937), p. 58. Also see Lefler, Contemporaries, pp. 321-324.

[4]Lefler, Contemporaries, p. 321.

[5]Ibid., pp. 321ff.

[6]"Southern legislators, during the period of Johnson's control over the reconstruction process, conceded to the Negro the right to testify." Lawanda and John H. Cox, Politics, Principle, and Prejudice (London: Collier MacMillan Limited, 1963), p. 169.

other hand, in the planter's view to allow Negro voting was folly. This practice would enable the unintelligent to rule over the better classes. But to the Negro, "if freedom meant anything, it meant land and the vote."[7]

Negro freedom, coupled with the new demands made by the freedman, affected the planter deeply; it was a symbol of the destruction of the world he had always known. The slave, whatever else he was, had been the planter's associate--in the church as well as in the field. This relationship was now broken; the planter and the Negro had to bargain, often acrimoniously, under the wage-labor system. Neither the freedman nor the planter fully understood the wage system and both were dissatisfied with it.[8] The freedman complained to the Freedmen's Bureau about nonpayment of and unfair wages. The planters complained to one another about the laxity of Negroes. Such dissatisfaction bred mutual hostility.[9]

The Freedmen's Bureau performed yeoman work in North

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[7]Allen, Reconstruction, p. 67.

[8]"In the first years he [the Negro] worked with hopeless irregularity." Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 14. However, North Carolina was an exception to this general rule. See below, p. 55.

[9]Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 9.

Carolina.[10] The organization in North Carolina distributed $1,500,000 worth of food to whites as well as Negroes. It established hospitals which cared for more than 40,000 patients and organized schools with 459 teachers and more than 20,000 pupils.[11] Despite its good deeds, the Freedmen's Bureau greatly irritated the whites of the state.

The planter felt that the Negro was betraying him by enlisting the aid of the Freedmen's Bureau against him when disputes arose. After years of paternalism and what the planter had considered fair treatment, it seemed that now the Negro ran away as soon as he was freed.[12] Although the freedman usually returned, he found that he did not receive the wages that he had expected.[13] When contracts were made, the planter also complained that he was not get-

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[10]For the work of the Freedmen's Bureau see George R. Bently, A History of the Freedmen's Bureau (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955).

[11]Lefler, Contemporaries, p. 318. See Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 576.

[12]The Negro ran away for a variety of reasons. The major one was to prove his freedom. Also, when a plantation changed hands, the freedmen left because he felt that if he stayed it would appear as if he were being sold with the land. C. W. Tebeau, "Some Aspects of Planter-Freedman Relations, 1865-1880," Journal of Negro History, (Lancaster, Pa. and Washington, D. C., 1916-), XXI (April, 1936), 130ff.

[13]"Of course great numbers of freedman did not move at all, and a majority of the others quickly returned to their old homes, but a general spirit of unrest was in the air." Nevins, Emergence of Modern America. p. 9.

ting his money's worth especially because of the irregularity of the Negro's labor.[14] "They don't work more than two days in the week," complained one irate employer.[15] It appeared that "the Negroes confounded freedom with the right to be idle."[16] Despite all this quarrelsomeness, in North Carolina "the great majority of freedmen were placed at fairly regular work during 1865-1866 . . . ."[17]

Sharecropping was the most suitable system for the conditions. Since money was scarce, the landowners did not have the money to pay wages and the tenants did not have the capital to pay rent. The landowner furnished the land, stock, implements, and seed, and when the crop was harvested, he received from one-half to sometimes two-thirds of the returns.[18] With a scarcity of money, the system was a natural

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[14]For a reproduction of a labor contract see Jesse Melville Fraser (ed.), "A Free Labor Contract, 1867," Journal of Southern History, (Baton Rouge, 1935-), VI (November, 1940), 546-548.

[15]S. H. Cooke to Paul C. Cameron, July 5, 1865 in Duncan Cameron Papers. "There were many complaints that the Negroes were negligent." Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 19.

[16]Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 17. One twentieth century historian said, "Freedom--it meant idleness . . .," and "the negroes would not work, the plantations could not produce," in Claude G. Bowers, The Tragic Era (Cambridge: Houghton-Mifflin, 1929), p. 48, 60.

[17]Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 18.

[18]Lefler, Contemporaries, p. 356. See Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 19 and Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 551.

outgrowth of the needs of the South. Sharecropping became increasingly popular and "it gained favor among the whites and was decidedly to the advantage of the Negroes as a whole."[19] The system was also valuable because "it furnished a transition to independence" for Negroes.[20]

The fact that sharecropping emerged after the Civil War might be partially attributed to the misunderstanding of the wage system. Robert Somers, a visitor to North Carolina during Reconstruction, correctly noted that the sharecropper did well if the price of crops was high.[21] He saw that the planter, not the Negro, was subject to price fluctuations on the market if the worker was on wages. If the price of crops was low and the freedman was paid cash money, the Negro did not suffer. The planter did. Conversely, if the price of crops was high, the planter had the better of the bargain. But the wage system did not give incentive to the wage earner. Thus, sharecropping gave the worker initiative, for he now had a serious interest in the amount of the crop that he harvested.

If the planter was frustrated over the new economic

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[19]Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 19. Also Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, pp. 550ff.

[20]Nevins, Emergence of Modern America, p. 20.

[21]Robert Somers, The Southern States Since the War (New York: MacMillan Company, 1871), p. 31.

alignments of Reconstruction, he was even more disturbed over Negro political activity. Although the Negro in North Carolina never dominated the legislature as was the case for a time in South Carolina, he began to organize with increasing political acumen. In September, 1865, a Negro convention was called which met at Raleigh.[22] Attending the convention were 120 delegates from all over the state. Most of the delegates were farmers, but a few were artisans. The convention demanded cash wages for labor, free public education, and repeal of all discriminatory legislation.[23] The convention was a success despite the fact that all its demands were not met. In reaction to this success, the planter became concerned over the Negro's ability to organize. The planter realized that since organization was the key to political success, his position would be jeopardized if the Negro continued such political activity. Walter F. Leak of Rockingham County may have exaggerated his alarm, but he told Ruffin that he had "serious fears, that it /Negro political activity/ may end in a Civil War, and if so, the late war, with all its atrocities is not to be compared to it . . . ."[24]

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[22]Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina, p. 150.

[23]Allen, Reconstruction, pp. 74-75.

[24]Walter F. Leak to Thomas Ruffin, February 29, 1868 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 192.

Political activity by the Negro and the freedman's economic demands nettled the planter. But the basis for his concern lay elsewhere. Whatever else slavery might have been, it was a form of social control by the planter (and the white man in general) over the Negro. When slavery was abolished, the planter's chief means of controlling Negro activity was likewise annulled. Now he sought a new means by which to control Negro activity. Such was the raison d'etre for the Black Code.

Most of the planters recognized that the Negro question, immediately after the war, was in a state of flux. They foresaw a future in which stable conditions would reappear and the Negro might take his place as a member of society. Although this station in society would be an inferior one, a glimmer of hope was held out for the Negro. Walter F. Leak guardedly referred to this future when he wrote Thomas Ruffin that "political rights in a great degree like social position, should never be confer. [sic] but should be earned."[25] Others disagreed with this proclamation. Walter Clark of Halifax declared of the Negro that "the proclamation of his freedom was the death knell of his race . . . . [The] Negro cannot live among us in the present

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[25]Walter F. Leak to Thomas Ruffin, January 20, 1868 in ibid., p. 187. Italics his.

state of things."[26] These two positions were illustrative of planter thought for the future of the freedman in North Carolina. Only the future would prove the validity of the predictions of one of these men, or perhaps neither of them would be correct in his assertions about the ultimate role of the Negro in a free society.

If the Negro problem was real before the Civil War, then it was of greater urgency and immediacy following the war. The demise of slavery left the planter with a situation for which he had not planned and, unrealistically, had hoped would never come to pass. After the initial shock of emancipation, the planter reassessed his relationship with the Negro in North Carolina. The planter continued to believe, however, that it was he who knew the Negro best and, therefore, that he alone should determine the role of the black man in North Carolina society.

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[26]Letter to the editor, Raleigh Daily Sentinel, November 30, 1865 in Aubrey Lee Brooks and Hugh Talmage Lefler (eds.), The Papers of Walter Clark (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), I, 156.

VI. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

On March 18, 1865, as the Union forces advanced on Raleigh, the Literary Board of North Carolina, in charge of the state's educational system, met in Raleigh for the last time.[1] On July 9, 1868, the University of North Carolina, which had valiantly struggled through the war without failing to keep its doors open, closed them to await a reorganization.[2] In 1865, Sidney Andrews, on his fourteen-week tour of the South, related that he hardly saw a dozen common schoolhouses.[3] These occurrences were symptomatic of the condition of education in North Carolina immediately following the war.

In the ante-bellum period public education in North Carolina, although not equal to that of most Northern states, had set the pace for the South under the able and guiding hand of Calvin Wiley. The common school system was built around an endowment of approximately $3,000,000 in the

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[1]Marcus C. S. Noble, A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p. 238.

[2]Ibid., p. 333.

[3]Sidney Andrews, The South Since the War (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), p. 389.

Literary Fund which was invested in internal improvement projects, stocks of state banks, and state bonds.[4] The common schools received about half their operating expenses from this source; local taxes provided the other half. Repudiation of the state debt wrecked this system because the financial institutions on which the Fund relied, having invested heavily in Confederate securities, quickly assumed bankruptcy.[5] In 1866 the total income from the Literary Fund was only $776.[6]

Higher education, before the war, was restrictive and the masses could not afford it. The cost of attendance was more than the yeoman family could manage for the schooling of his children.[7] It could be said that the yeoman's "social interests had been sacrificed to the planter's creed that no education was needed for the laborer . . . ."[8] The University of North Carolina, never in

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[4]Whitener, "Public Education in North Carolina During Reconstruction, 1865-1876," p. 67.

[5]Ibid., p. 68.

[6]Edgar W. Knight, The Public School in North Carolina (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1916), p. 104.

[7]In 1869 the estimated yearly expense at the University of North Carolina was $200 to $225, including board.

[8]Robert D. W. Conner, "The Rehabilitation of a Rural Commonwealth," American Historical Review, XXXVI (October, 1930), 51.

its early years a major institution, had become before the time of the outbreak of the war a respectable college with about 500 students. It survived the war but repudiation of the state debt also swept away its principal resources, thus necessitating the closing of its doors.[9]

Before the war no organized program for Negro education had existed. Now that the former slaves were free men and citizens, it was seen that they must be given a modicum of education if they were to discharge their obligations responsibly.

Thus, at the end of the war, an immense task faced the people of North Carolina. Not only did they have to resuscitate the common school and the University, both of which had fallen, but they had to provide new and expanded facilities for the thousands of freedmen. Without continual planter cooperation and leadership, education would lag. The planter's reaction to educational ideas was important.

The planter had not seen the importance of free public education before the war and, hence, support for it was lacking. He had emphasized the college, which was virtually restricted to his class. In preparing his children for college, the planter had either employed a tutor or

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[9]"The University of North Carolina survived the war; Reconstruction wrecked it." In ibid., p. 50.

sent them to neighboring academies for preparatory study. However, with fortunes lost as a result of the war, these institutions became impracticable.

The first and most natural problem for the planter to attack was that of the University of North Carolina. Educators compared the facilities of this institution with those in the North. The University was inferior, but "ought to equal any in the North," averred Elias Dodson. But the North had taxed property for education. Dodson pointed out that Ohio collected one mill on the dollar for education and Massachusetts taxed each settler 12½ cents per $100 for higher education. He concluded that North Carolina had been "penny wise and pound foolish in not doing these things before 1860."[10] Furthermore, North Carolina's "politicians ought to aim, as the first thing, to educate all the people."[11]

"All the people" included the freedmen. To provide schooling for the mass of whites was problem enough, but to educate the freed Negroes would require a herculean effort by the state. Negro education was complicated by many factors. The first obstacle was that the vast majority of

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[10]Elias Dodson to Thomas Ruffin, February 16, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 50-51.

[11]Ibid. Italics his.

Southern teachers simply would not teach Negroes. Second, since the Negro was thought to be innately inferior intellectually, to educate him would be an act of futility. Therefore, any educational system for the Negro was likely to be halfhearted. Third, and this was the greatest obstacle, because of the Southerner's caste consciousness, the Negro would have to be taught separately.[12] Despite these forces tending to inhibit plans for Negro education, "among the influential and thinking people of the State there was no hostility [to Negro education], and it was favored by them rather than otherwise, provided that they [the whites] were not taxed to pay for it."[13]

The University of North Carolina was tied to the issue of the common schools. The University provided teachers for the public schools. The common school in turn was a source of students for the University. If the University should fail, the supply of teachers for the common schools would dry up and the ability of the public schools to survive would be endangered. Walter Clark advised that "a farsighted liberal policy should be adopted" in regard

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[12]"The possibility of mixed schools doubtless more than any other reason convinced even the friends of the public schools that a temporary suspension of the system was a policy of discretion." See Whitener, "Public Education," p. 71.

[13]Joseph G. de Roulhac Hamilton, "Freedmen's Bureau in North Carolina," South Atlantic Quarterly, (Durham, 1902-), VIII (April, 1909), 156.

to public education because, as he succinctly put it, "the cause of learning is the cause of civilization."[14]

The University had political as well as economic problems. Ex-Governor David Swain had at one time been President of the University. He and his faculty had been considered secessionists and attempts were made by those seeking to placate the North to remove Swain and the faculty. On the contrary, the University was attacked by conservatives and strong secessionists. These men saw in the University a source of subversion similar to that connected with the infamous Benjamin Hedrick incident. Hedrick, a chemistry professor at the University in the 1850's, had been run out of the state for merely suggesting that he might vote for John C. Fremont for President in 1856. In a tone reminiscent of the Hedrick vendetta, one of the more conservative trustees exhorted against the institution:

> The University Faculty are in bad repute and nothing will resurrect the institution except a disbanding of the concern. They are thoroughly rotten and ought to be directly removed from offending the public sight or scent and their places supplied with sensible Southern men. I will not vote a dollar to the institution until they all resign. Storm them out.[15]

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[14]Letter to the editor, Raleigh Daily Sentinel, February 9, 1866 in Brooks and Lefler (eds.), Walter Clark, I, 163-165.

[15]Matthias E. Manly to Thomas Ruffin, December 4, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 137.

Swain was caught in the middle. Unionists were attacking the school for being too conservative and secessionists charged that Swain was too liberal. Eventually, as both suggested, Swain and the faculty were fired along with the Board of Trustees. The trustees were replaced, but the political vicissitudes of the University were not over. The University would subsequently go through more troubles, even closing for a time, until a reorganization enabled it to reopen in 1875.

The common schools were in a similar plight. In 1866 the legislature abolished the office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the office of Treasurer of the Literary Fund.[16] Not until the Republican legislature met in 1868-1869, after the ratification of the Constitution of 1868, did the state revive the common schools.[17] This legislature had considerable success in appropriating money for public education.[18]

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[16]Edgar W. Knight, The Influence of Reconstruction on Education in the South (New York: Columbia University Press, 1913), p. 18.

[17]Ibid., pp. 13-29.

[18]In 1869 there were 330,581 children enrolled in 1,906 schoolhouses at an expense to the state of $165,290.50 (fifty cents per pupil). A college for Negro students was to be organized. An institute for the deaf and blind was in operation with a white and a Negro department which had a total enrollment of 154 pupils. Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina for the Year 1869 (Raleigh: M. S. Littlefield, 1869), p. 55, p. 94, p. 110, and passim.

During the early years of Reconstruction, there was no awakening of faith in public education on the part of the planters. The philosophic basis for free public education simply did not exist. The Board of Trustees report in 1867 outlined a different philosophy. Education in the University was not to be designed for pragmatic use:

> The future farmers and planters of our country may gather some added refinements of thought and taste from free intercourse with those who are engaged in purely literary studies, while the temper of the latter class may be made more practical by habitual fellowship with those whose studies have a more obvious character of reality and present usefulness . . . . The planter will be none the less successful in his profession for having thus gained some tincture of classical learning.[19]

The University was oriented toward the planter. Vocational or technological crafts were not to be emphasized; the purpose of the University was to build citizenship and a solid fellowship between men of the planter class and others. So, the planter view on education had not changed radically from pre-Civil War days. He still held the view that college should serve the needs and desires of the better class. Therefore, responsibility for the education of the masses of the people did not, to any great extent, exist.

The South had egregiously failed in one area of

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[19] Report of the Trustees of the University of North Carolina to the General Assembly (January, 1867), in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 143-147.

education before the war. While she had trained excellent leaders, she had not prepared capable followers.[20] Also, the South had been overcome in a war which was modern in many of its technological aspects. To harness the industrialization needed for economic strength in a new era, the South had to produce men who could understand technical skills. During the early days after the war, the planter class failed to recognize this. Later, the planter would see the implications of the industrial nature of the war and the relationship of technical skills to economic progress but not until the education of the South lagged still further behind.

During Reconstruction, the planters of North Carolina did not look favorably upon mass education. It was the Republicans, not the planters, who instituted a public educational system for all. Nevertheless, the Republicans were quickly ousted and the quality of education in North Carolina suffered as the planters returned to power. The planter philosophy, exhibited by his reliance upon paternalism and rural individualism, was not attuned to the idea of free public education for all the children of the state.

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[20]Neither had the South trained men to accept military discipline, a part of following. This excess individualism caused Confederate defeat, asserts David Donald in his essay, "Died of Democracy," in Why the North Won the War (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960), pp. 77-90. On page 90, Donald says, "We should write on the tombstone of the Confederacy: 'Died of Democracy.'"

VII. IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION

The conflict of 1861-1865 had considerably juggled the population. During the war and immediately after the war, many families gathered their belongings and moved elsewhere. Northern migrants moved generally westward, but a few went to the South after the war to earn fame or notoriety as "carpetbaggers." Southerners also moved to the West. A few ex-Confederates left the country altogether either to escape arrest or to seek resettlement.[1]

Southerners had always been on the move. The soil-killing crops which were grown with wasteful abandon necessitated the planter's seeking virgin soil in the west. But when the planter removed after the war, he did so for other reasons.

Locally, many planters lost their homes or were forced to sell. The Negro sometimes left his home and roamed about, causing the crops to be left to rot in the

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[1]Judah P. Benjamin escaped through Florida to the Bahamas. He went to England where he practiced law. John C. Breckinridge left for Europe via Florida and Cuba. General Jubal A. Early and scientist Matthew F. Maury sought to colonize former confederates in New Zealand and Mexico. Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 547.

field.[2] Since the recent past was dismal and the immediate future looked bleak, the hardy, usually the young, left their native surroundings and sought better opportunities in the newer states and territories. If the Southerners "were fighting for the preservation of their civilization,"[3] the destruction of their homes was mournful and more than they could bear. Old Weldon N. Edwards wanted to leave North Carolina because "we are without hope . . .," and probably would have left except that he did not know where to go.[4] Edward J. Hale of Fayetteville considered leaving North Carolina (he eventually did) because he could not find work.[5] And so it was not uncommon for a planter to write to a friend, "Yesterday our children left for their new home in Mississippi."[6]

Of course, most of the planters remained in the

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[2]See Benjamin Brawley, A Social History of the American Negro (New York: MacMillan Company, 1921), pp. 278-281.

[3]Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, p. 192.

[4]Weldon N. Edwards to Thomas Ruffin, October 11, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 134.

[5]Thomas Ruffin to Edward J. Hale, June 5, 1866 in ibid., IV, 60.

[6]Paul C. Cameron to Mrs. M. B. Mordecai, December 12, 1865 in Duncan Cameron Papers.

state.[7] Even of the young, the emigrants were in the minority.

While a few North Carolinians were deserting the place of their birth, thousands of families of Europeans were likewise leaving their native lands. The stream of immigration to the United States was a source of hope to the planter. One of the many apologies for slavery had been that if the Negro were freed, he would not work. In the first chaotic years of Reconstruction, with Negroes roaming about, the planter saw his prediction vindicated. Since he knew that he needed a large labor pool, he considered the possibility that these immigrants could provide for his needs. Thus, the planter renewed his request for immigrants, particularly of foreigners, so that a steady, stable labor force would be at hand.

The planter did need a stable labor force to ensure the production of staple crops. The Negro had served as this labor supply in the ante-bellum South. Edward Conigland, the brilliant lawyer of Halifax, agreed with the venerable Judge Ruffin that to have the Negro leave North Carolina would "deprive the state of many able bodied laborers." But Conigland did not think that they would remain. If they

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[7]See U. S., Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States: 1870. Population, I, 318.

did, they would be a "noxious Nuisance" to the state. Conigland saw immigration as a solution to the planter's problems and called it a "Blessing to us."[8]

The immigration of foreigners was supposed to supplant the Negro slave. Therefore, the planter would not accept immigration indiscriminately. The newcomer would have to accept an assigned position in Southern society:

> The immigrant would come only as a laborer, he could not be amalgamated to any extent before the second generation, by which time his rough points would be worn off and his character assimilated to our own.[9]

In the South the immigrant was to take his place in a semifeudal society. As social stratification had been complete with the Negro, so it would remain. The immigrant must accept his place and be indoctrinated in the Southern "way of life":

> I yet have a great dread of any species of immigration, European or Yankee. I vastly prefer the former, which might outnumber us, or seriously affect the salient points in our character. But I am of the opinion, that the Southern people are tenacious of life that they will preserve their characteristics and impress them upon the immigrant, even when outnumbered.[10]

The planter was not without fear over the proposed influx. Although the immigrant was to be a serf economically, politically, and socially, he might challenge the

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[8]Edward Conigland to Thomas Ruffin, December 4, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 45ff.

[9]Ibid. [10]Ibid.

Southern "way of life." When this challenge was imminent, "Southerners, unless they hoped for immediate profit from the immigrants, rallied to defend their race and culture or to repel the supposed threat of economic competition."[11] Still, the immigrant was a white man, and if he could adjust, there was a possibility that by the second generation, his social status could be raised.[12]

During the first years of Reconstruction, North Carolina did not actively enter the race to attract immigrants.[13] Certainly not many immigrants entered the state before 1870. In 1860 there were 3,299 persons of foreign birth and in 1870 only 3,029.[14] Not only did the percentage of immigrants decline, but the number decreased absolutely. Despite all the talk of immigration, not much was accomplished. The work of the immigrant thus remained to

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[11]Roland T. Bertoff, "Southern Attitudes Toward Immigration, 1865-1914," Journal of Southern History, XVII (August, 1951), 343.

[12]Edward Conigland to Thomas Ruffin, December 4, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 46.

[13]South Carolina established an immigration bureau in 1868 and Louisiana had an agent abroad in 1867, but North Carolina passed its laws to encourage immigration mainly between 1871 and 1875. B. J. Lowenberg, "Efforts of the South to Encourage Immigration, 1865-1890," South Atlantic Quarterly, XXXIII (October, 1934), 369 and passim.

[14]U. S., Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States: 1860, p. 623 and Ninth Census, 1870, I, 318.

be done by the Negro, who did not leave the state en masse and, in time, proved that he would perform more creditably than the planter had anticipated.[15]

While the planter was trying to pick up the pieces of his shattered economy, he looked outside the state for help and for hope. There would be shifts of population in the state, but not extensively during these first years of Reconstruction. The shock of new peoples with new ideas would not be as great as the planter had anticipated and he would successfully indoctrinate the newcomers in the planter's beliefs. And as before the war, the planters' "way of life" would be maintained--with the planter at the helm.

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[15]"Although some entrepreneurs sought immigrants to make up for the supposed labor shortage, industry was ultimately built by abundant native labor." Roland T. Bertoff, "Southern Attitudes Toward Immigration," p. 260.

VIII. YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

When the war ended, the conditions of the South afforded little time for the planters to indulge in speculative thought. The individual had to work harder than before in order to sustain himself and his family. Nevertheless, the pre-Civil War leaders ruminated the war, its causes, effects, and the future. But after the South put aside the sword, the chaotic conditions themselves apparently affected planter thought processes. Once again the planter thought unrealistically, this time about his past and the probable future.

One of the things which distressed the planter, which he could not escape, was the reality that he had lost the war. He had sincerely believed that the cause for which he fought was just. Since, to the planter, the right was necessarily vindicated, all he was able to do at first was to lament his fate. One writer cried out:

> Where is North Carolina? She has had the meanest man in the state set over her as Provisional Governor. . . . Her newspapers are feeble, her convention servile, her people cowed. She lacks that something of spirit, without which a state or a man may be thoroughly respectable, good, honest, brave, but will yet lack the glance of fire, the free bold bearing that secures deference and a place above the salt without asking for it.[1]

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[1]Cornelia P. Spencer quoted in Chamberlain, Old Days in Chapel Hill, p. 118.

Bemoaning his lot did not solve either of the questions which he asked himself--what had caused the war and why had the South lost? Therefore, he turned to consider some of the alternatives. Two reasons he did not consider were the internal political weakness of the Confederacy and the failure of his class to lead the region intelligently. These factors historians would subsequently consider to have been important factors in the Northern victory. Instead the planter blamed fanaticism for starting the war and his own immorality and the overall strength of the North for the South's losing it.

The idea that his cause was right, if not righteous, occasioned this query from one writer, "How a kind Providence could have allowed the crushing of the Southern people and their just cause and subsequent and still existing horror is more than I can fathom."[2] Keeping in mind the belief that the just cause will prevail, the planter thought that he must have, in some manner, sinned. In answer to this question, Weldon N. Edwards, in December, 1865, replied:

> The political and moral distempers of the times preexisted our late fatal struggle and were doubtless the cause of our overthrow. We had strayed far and made void God's law--it was time for him to work--and it

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[2]R. A. Hamilton to Thomas Ruffin, February 8, 1869 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 220.

> was his own good pleasure to choose the worst of Instruments to afflict, that he might chasten us and bring us back from the wicked paths in which we were recklessly wandering.[3]

Edwards' definition of the "moral distempers of the times" probably did not include slavery. The planter had not, since the 1830's, considered slavery to be morally wrong. But exactly how the South had sinned was not explained.

Although slavery was irrevocably abolished and the planter made the psychological adjustment almost immediately,[4] he failed to recognize the important role, whether rightly or wrongly, the institution had played in the struggle. Lincoln had fought the war to preserve the Union, but many Northerners saw the conflict as a device with which to abolish slavery. The planter, during Reconstruction, did not emphasize the role which slavery had played in the war. Walter Clark thought that the South would have volun-

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[3]Weldon N. Edwards to Thomas Ruffin, December 5, 1865 in ibid., IV, 47.

[4]William A. Graham was an exception. As late as January, 1865, he wrote, "The Northern mind is wedded to the idea of reconstruction, and notwithstanding the violence of the extravagant Republicans, I am convinced would guarantee slavery as it now exists, and probably would make other concessions, including of course, amnesty, restoration of confiscated property except slaves, and perhaps some compensation for a part of these." Quoted from a letter to a friend in North Carolina, January 28, 1865 in Chamberlain, Old Days in Chapel Hill, p. 113.

tarily outlawed slavery "as our own interests would have long since led us to abolish" it.[5] Another writer dismissed the slavery controversy more casually, "The institution of slavery. . . was established. . . contrary to the wishes of the people of North Carolina. It no longer exists. God has so ordained it."[6] Despite this apparent historical inaccuracy, the institution of slavery _per se_ was not seen as the cause of the war.

In addition to his own sinfulness, the planter viewed "the menacing tide of fanaticism" as having been a cause of the war. Fanaticism had taken the slavery issue and had blown it out of all reasonable proportion. The Raleigh _Sentinel_ concurred in this belief and thought that the extremists on both sides caused the war:

> The South felt that it had a cause for action. . . . The North never did, and does not to this day, admit that the South had a cause--that its cause was at all justifiable or even palliated by the circumstances. . . . Both are wrong.
>
> The revolution was the result of ignorance on the part of both peoples, North and South, of the real purposes and designs of each other, induced and promoted by the evil purposes of bad men on both sides. Hence

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[5]Letter to the editor, (Raleigh) _Daily Progress_, December 12, 1865 in Brooks and Lefler (eds.), _Walter Clark_, I, 162.

[6]Speech by A. M. Waddell in Wilmington as reported by the (Raleigh) _Daily Sentinel_, August 8, 1865.

> we have always held that the war was the work in its inception, not of the people, but of politicians and demagogues.[7]

Jonathan Worth agreed with the Sentinel's views about rabble rousers. He said, "Extremists North and South had driven the better portion of the nation into unwise strife. The extremists of the South, with whom I never had sympathy, are conquered and generally ready to become loyal citizens."[8] But Worth did not answer one important question. If he and others were moderates, why did they not stop the extremists when the latter were advising injudicious proceedings? During the secession battle, men such as Worth, Zebulon B. Vance, Josiah Turner, Jr., David L. Swain, William A. Graham, John M. Morehead, and Thomas Ruffin--all Union men--stood aside and let the initiative be wrested from them by the ardent secessionists. After the war, the inference is found in statements like Worth's that the Union men forgot about their previous mistakes; at least they did not write about them. The moderate blamed the fire-eater and the abolitionist for causing the war, but if all who were guilty of starting the war are to be considered, the moderate had a share in the blame.

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[7](Raleigh) Sentinel, August 12, 1865.

[8]Jonathan Worth to Mr. Yates (a Union soldier stationed in North Carolina), February, 1866 in Hamilton (ed.), Jonathan Worth, I, 492.

After immoderation had led to war, the South's lack of war potential lost the war. The Sentinel took this position:

> None but the blind could fail to see how utterly inferior in the production of everything which tended to lighten labor, to promote the industrial arts, and to contribute to the comfort of the people, the South was to the North.[9]

Despite the fact that defeat was bitter, the planter had other memories of days gone by. He remembered his place in the ante-bellum nation and thought of how it might have been had the South won. Everyone would have lived in a Southern paradise--in perpetuum. Had victory been the South's, the planter would have been the savior of the region. Edward J. Hale lavished praise upon the magnanimous planter. He asserted that the planters "would not have regarded their own individual losses if only the Cause had not also been lost."[10]

The planter conveniently forgot the brutalities of the Old South. The inequities of slavery, the poverty of the poor white, and the rank ignorance of all, save the planter, were overlooked. At the same time, he told himself that he had not brought about the war--the extremist had. This meant that he had brought only good to the South and his

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[9](Raleigh) Daily Sentinel, August 12, 1865.

[10]Edward J. Hale to Thomas Ruffin, June 8, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 61.

position of leadership was unimpeachable. Since the war had been precipitated by others, the planter's "way of life" had not really been beaten. Rather the extremist misinterpretation and misrepresentation of that "way of life" had been destroyed. Out of this milieu, based on some reality, but more fantasy, the idea of the Lost Cause would later emerge. The Cause would be mystical and undefined; it would represent all that was honorable and just. All the finer things in the Southern "way of life" were to be identified with the Cause.

Younger men, at the war's end, were not so engrossed with the past. They had to accept the present and strive for the future. Later, when they had proved themselves economically, they would reflect upon the era of their fathers and, aided by the romantic novelists, would seek escape from the new elements of industrialization in the South and find security in the old plantation, agrarian "way of life." But the future did not arrive until the present had been lived. And the exigencies of the times did not allow this thought to mature since practical ideas were needed.

The present required many renovations, both political and economic. The slave system was gone and a new economic base had to be constructed. The more realistic planters recognized that this would not be done overnight.

One writer advised "a little more patience and perseverance on the part of the people. . . and a proper degree of caution and prudence. . ." which might "yet lead us through the darkness of the present into the light of civil liberty."[11] This was sound advice to a people enmeshed in a conflict of forces--adjustment to the Negro's freedom, economic realignments, military rule, and political reconstruction.

But not all agreed upon this path for the future. There were some who thought that it would be best to leave home and seek their fortune elsewhere. One man expressed it thusly:

> If I were a young man, I would go back to England; the land of my Fathers; for at present it is the freeest [sic] government on earth, but as it is, I shall remain where I am, and be a peaceful and law-abiding citizen the few remnants of my allotted days.[12]

An old man's pessimism was hardened by the Act of March 2, 1867. But even before the Military Reconstruction Act Jonathan Worth advised that "it would be better for you and for everybody else who is a white man to leave North Carolina. The South is never again,--at least for several generations."[13] Even the distant future held out little

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[11]Letter to the editor, (Wilmington) Journal, July 26, 1866 in ibid., I, 84.

[12]Walter F. Leak to Thomas Ruffin, May 15, 1867 in ibid., IV, 179.

[13]Jonathan Worth to B. A. Worth (his brother), Sep-

promise to these men, including Worth (although as governor he would work himself literally to death for the state), and they viewed the immediate future ominously. One wrote, "Indeed I feel as if I had no country, but was merely a shipwrecked mariner subjected to be/ing/ tossed about by the wind and waves."[14]

When the Military Reconstruction Act was passed, Weldon Edwards said, "Free Government is now defunct, I fear, forever. The American theory and the Principles in which our ancestors had such strong and perdurable faith are now spurned."[15] A year later, Walter F. Leak grimly concurred, "I am convinced and for one give up, that a 'democracy' has and always will prove a failure."[16]

The young man, son of a planter, would not be quite so bitter in the long run, for he had his whole life in front of him. The future must be wrested from the "apathy and bitterness" of defeat, upon which a new society was to be built. This was a new determination to rebuild the state

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tember 11, 1865 in Hamilton (ed.), Jonathan Worth, I, 417.

[14]Walter F. Leak to Thomas Ruffin, May 15, 1867 in Hamilton (ed.), Thomas Ruffin, IV, 179.

[15]Weldon N. Edwards to Thomas Ruffin, March 15, 1867 in ibid., IV, 172.

[16]Walter F. Leak to Thomas Ruffin, January 20, 1868 in ibid., IV, 187.

and the region upon the dignity of the South as exemplified in the Cause. These were the men who would remain and declare that they would "not let the shrewd, skilled, persevering, adventurer from other lands crowd us out."[17]

The North Carolinian, in the main, stayed in the land of his fathers. He was entrenched in the belief in his "way of life," only borrowing from the North that which could be adapted and integrated into his ideology. The young men faced the future with a new determination. As would be said of another generation, these men were "tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of /their/ heritage."[18] It was they who had to bear the burden of leading the South out of the morass of defeat to find a happier future.

During early Reconstruction, the planter, in deed as well as thought, did not face his situation realistically, except for his approach to labor matters. He relied upon sharecropping to solve the problem of scarcity of capital. This system was probably the one best suited for the conditions.

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[17]Charles F. Deems to the editor, (Raleigh) Sentinel, August 10, 1865.

[18]John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1961 in Richard L. Grossman (ed.), The First 100 Days of the Kennedy Administration (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), p. 144.

However, the planter tried to reenslave the Negro by the Black Code. He failed to see that this would be unacceptable to the North. He argued foolishly and wastefully about a constitution which was in fact mild. He refused to admit the advantage of a free, public educational system supported by taxation of all. He did not understand the forces which had led to his defeat. These errors were great, but the most grievious was his opposition to Presidential Reconstruction.

Had the planter allowed the region to accept the mild plans of Johnson, Reconstruction would probably have ended more quickly and everyone, North and South, would have been happier. But the planter unrealistically chose to oppose moderation and received in its stead much harsher treatment. To a large extent, the failings of planter leadership accounted for the troubles of the South, manifest in Radical Reconstruction.

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